

# Free thought

Vol. 7]

Feb 1977

[ No. 2



# Free thought

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED  
RATIONALIST MONTHLY

FEBRUARY 1977

VOL. 7  
NO. 2

Annual Subscription  
Rs. 6

Single Copy  
60 Paise

GOD IS A MYTH; IMMORTALITY, AN ILLUSION; RELIGION, A GIGANTIC FRAUD

# Letters

## FLOOD VICTIMS AND GOLDEN CHARIOT

Sir:—Any humanitarian will be grieved to read the news item in the dailies of 30-11-76 that Tamilnadu Government have sanctioned for this year Rs. 15 lakhs for the renovation of temples, such as construction of golden chariots for Swamimalai and Marudamalai temples.

Recently thousands of people have been rendered homeless on account of cyclonic storm and floods in various parts of this state. Government is inviting donations and clothes from the public for these victims. The total public contributions

## SPIRIT HEALING

Sir:—This has reference to the article regarding spirit healing in the issue of the Illustrated Weekly of India dated 19-12-76. It is stated that one case of chronic Lymphatic Leukaemia was cured by Dr. Ramakant Keni of Bombay Hospital by way of praying etc. I challenge Dr. Ramakant Keni to

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The Views and opinions expressed in the signed articles are not necessarily those of the Editor or IRA—Ed.

## KUMBH MELA SECULARISM

We are all familiar with the spectacle of politicians changing parties and shifting loyalties. For the sake of political expediency, even dictionary definitions are sought to be changed now.

The latest amendment of the preamble to our Constitution has used the word 'secular', we presume, to mean what it ordinarily conveys. If Mrs. Indira Gandhi wished to dispense religious equality and wanted all religions to flourish in their pristine purity, she need not have amended the preamble. India was not a religious State and there was no state religion even prior to the amendment.

"Secular" in the context of a State can only mean 'concerned with the affairs of this world, not sacred, not monastic, but temporal'. (In other

contexts it could also mean "sceptical of religious truth or opposed to religious education", whence the words 'secularist and secularize' are derived).

By describing India as a 'secular' state explicitly, it is now more emphatically stated that religion will not be allowed to enter politics or the activities of the State. The state cannot be 'Hindu Raj' for some period nor a 'Muslim Sultanate' for another interregnum. The demarcation between religion and State is to be clear and unambiguous. Equally political functionaries should not use a religious platform to increase their influence.

It has come as a rude shock that Mrs. Gandhi should have chosen to go to Kumbh Mela and expatiate on how Secularism would not go beyond religious equality. Every time a high

government functionary attends a religious function or a temple, such a function or place receives disproportionate publicity and respectability. Smaller leaders emulate their leader, while masses follow leaders. This is exploited to foist religious education, superstition and caste prejudices.

Mrs. Gandhi is no religious bigot

nor a believer in caste. But her utterances will be misused and exploited. She will have to strain more to undo the effects of such talk. She said that secularism did not mean what the dictionary said. But we like to believe that she did not mean what she in fact said.

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The FREETHOUGHT (formerly "INDIAN RATIONALIST", founded by S. Ramanathan) is the journal of the Indian Rationalist Association, published monthly. Its purpose is to promote Scientific and Rational thinking among the people. The editor invites articles in general agreement with the objectives of the association. Articles should be typed double spaced on one side and sent in duplicate. The publication of articles may at times take sometime. Hence contributors are requested not to send copies of same to other journals for publication.

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### AN ANNOUNCEMENT

We are glad to inform our Members and prospective Members that in deference to the wishes of many members, it has now been decided to send to those interested either "CHARWAKA" (Telugu Rationalist Monthly) or "YUKTHIVADI" (Malayalam Rationalist monthly) in lieu of "FREETHOUGHT". Members desirous of opting for these journals may advise us of their choice. While we have already finalized the arrangement with these two journals, we are endeavouring to supply journals in other Indian languages. Be on the look out for our future Announcements.

General Secretary,  
I.R.A.



# Sai Baba Controversy

## A Testing Time for Intellectuals

By V. T. RAJSHEKAR SHETTY



The country is now happily in the midst of a national debate over the "Satya Sai Baba issue" and this is the first time in the history of independent India that a rationalist battle has come to be waged on such a big scale and that too against the mightiest, the richest and the most famous of all the godmen wielding the highest influence—political, economic, social and what not.

Thanks to Dr. Abraham Koor and the Indian Rationalist Association that sponsored his "Divine Miracle Exposure Campaign", the Sai Baba issue was raised for the first time into a national debate. The rationalist movement got a shot in the arm when the Bangalore University set up a scientists committee which exposed one of Sai Baba's satellites, namely the 'ash boy' Sai Krishna of Pandavapura. Subsequently, when Dr. Narasimhaiah, Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University, a distinguished nuclear physicist heading the University's Committee investigating "miracles and verifiable superstitions" released the three letters written by him to the Sai Baba after the latter failed to answer any of them, the whole "divine miracle

exposure campaign" became a subject of national debate. Almost every paper and journal was agog with news and pictures.

It is in this context that, as a rationalist, I would like to analyse the role of the following three sectors: namely (i) scientists and intellectuals, (2) left political parties and (3) the Press and journalists.

I am selecting only three sections because each had a big and crucial role to play in the current controversy vitally affecting the biggest-ever rationalist battle. Because it is on the success or failure of this battle depends country's scientific and technological march. Let it be remembered that the "Sai Baba controversy" does not concern any individual but our very system—our value system, our philosophy, our very way of life. And hence the importance of the three sectors which can make or mar the onward march of the nation.

### (1) SCIENTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS :

Among the intellectuals I give the highest importance to scientists, because, the task of

scientifically examining miracles and superstitions and its implications on the society is essentially that of scientists. It has been time and again said in the country that India has the third largest scientific community in the world but our scientific progress is something to be ashamed of. Top scientists like Dr. H. N. Sethna, Dr. Raja Ramanna, Dr. Dhawan and many others have diagnosed this disease saying that the greatest defect of India's science education is that it has failed to promote a scientific outlook. Progress of a nation no doubt depends on its scientific and technological advancement. But more important than science and technological revolution is the development of scientific thinking. Inaugurating the 9th Marathi Science Congress near Poona on December 29, 1974, Dr. Sethna said "promoting scientific culture did not consist only in teaching physics, chemistry..... What is more important is the spread of a scientific way of thinking in the country". This, he regretted, had not been stressed nor its importance widely propagated and accepted.

Mr. P. N. Haksar, Deputy Chairman of the planning commission and also the head of the CSIR, in a speech in Bangalore on May 30, 1975, lashed out at the country's scientific community and said it failed to bring about social change because it did not denounce the "outmoded Indian value system that stood for timelessness and changelessness" and also failed to inculcate a scientific temper in the society.

Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the first in India to urge the scientists to help promote a scientific temper in the country. Addressing the 7th annual session of the National Academy of Sciences at Allahabad as far back as March 5, 1938, he said: Most of us, even when we talk glibly of science, betray it in our thought and action. Even scientists,

learned in their particular subjects, often forget to apply the scientific method outside that charmed sphere. And yet it is the scientific method alone that offers hope to mankind," he said asking the scientists to fight methods opposed to science.

But I am sorry to note that even when the "Sai Baha issue" turned into a national debate, not one single scientist of all India fame came out with a statement to support this scientific investigation, fearing that any support to such a cause might affect their comfortable way of life.

However, some dozen top intellectuals of West Bengal like Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and others sent a telegram to Dr. Narasimhiah congratulating the university's efforts. This is the only silver lining in the murky horizon of Indian Intellectuals.

In addition to this solitary move from West Bengal and some such isolated cases, lately there has been some move to constitute at the national level a committee of scientists headed by Mr. Haksar. The Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, Dr. S. N. Sen, is also understood to be forming a Committee of Vice-Chancellors for the same purpose. And students at Mysore University and Bangalore university are also making a signature drive. That is all.

Just because our country's scientists and intellectuals are silent, that does not mean that all of them are unsympathetic to this scientific investigation and rational thinking. Not at all. The problem with them is that they dare not speak out for fear of incurring the wrath of vested interests who have a strangle-hold on the life of each and every one of them. This is the secret. The country has turned out to be an intellectual wasteland with some glow-worms here and there.

It is the scientists who should have seized this golden opportunity thrown up by this

first-ever national debate to expose the miracle-mongering which bristles with serious dangers to the promotion of a scientific outlook in the country. I appeal to the scientists to even now come out with their views. Better late than never. If this opportunity is lost, it may be lost for ever.

## (2) LEFT POLITICAL PARTIES :

What surprised me most is the stoic silence of even Left-leaning political parties like the CPI and the CPM that boast of radical programmes and revolutionary fervour. Even when it was made clear by Dr. Narasimhiah that the issue of miracles and superstitions have nothing to do with god or religion, they have failed to take up the issue, at least in the interest of educating their party workers. This is because the Marxist-oriented parties in India are under an erroneous impression that social issues are not their concern. The moment the poverty of the country is solved, through class struggle, all other problems including social problems will be automatically solved. This has been their historic stand and it is because of this strange philosophy that they have failed to attract into their fold lower castes particularly the untouchables and tribals, the worst victims of caste oppression. As long as these left parties ignore the social evils, they will never be able to make any dent on the Indian scene. And they will remain a pathetic figure, willing to wound but afraid to hurt. The stoic silence of these parties on this raging national debate has exposed them in their true colours. Except a letter from Prof. Hiren Mukherjee of CPI offering to raise the issue in Parliament no other political leader of the Left parties has come out with any statement although they could have done a lot by demanding the Government to constitute a committee to probe miracle-mongering. This is the fate of Left parties in India.

## (3) ROLE OF THE PRESS :

It must be said to the credit of Indian Press that for the first time a majority of them have taken a brave stand on the current national debate on miracle-mongering. But for the co-operation extended by the press, the subject would have not reached such a serious proportion. Thanks to the Press, the Sai Baba issue is being discussed in almost every educated household in India today.

In this connection I have to pay tributes to the national English press—particularly the "Times of India," which even came out with an editorial denouncing miracle-mongering. "Except in the poets' imagination and the fool's dreams, miracles do not exist," the editorial (July 21, 1976) said adding: "This is the harsh fact of life which many of us refuse to accept. There never was a miracle. There never will be one," it said congratulating the Bangalore University's efforts to expose this "tragic fraud."

By and large, journalists in India have shown commendable courage and proved they are a forward-looking lot. But, unfortunately, they suffered from an in-built handicap. Their contribution to this national debate would have been much greater had they not been gagged by the tycoons who own the press. Since quite a number of these press barons happen to be a part of the Big Business, they naturally represent that cream of the country's vested interests effectively shielded by the Sai Baba. In spite of this, the Karnataka Union of Working journalists passed a resolution supporting the Bangalore University's efforts and Mr. S. B. Kolpe, the then President of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, too has exposed the Sai Baba bluffs in his weekly, "Clarity".

This does not mean that the entire lot of journalists in the country possess a cent per cent rational outlook. Since a majority of



them come from the upper castes, naturally they are not prepared to go all out to attack the value system. They are as much interested in the caste status quo as the press baron, in the class status quo. Unless this unholy alliance of class and caste interests in the press industry is broken, we have no hope of getting a free press.

From the above survey, we can now broadly make out the role played by the three key sectors; (1) scientists and intellectuals (2) politicians and political parties and (3) the press and the journalists. How weak is the country's fabric is proved from the survey of these three sectors, particularly the scientists. It is to be noted that all these three sectors comprise only the educated lot-

the cream of the country's society. Particularly the scientists, intellectuals and the journalists are the very eyes, ears and heart of the country and if this is the state of this vital part of the body what will be the health of the country?

If the country has to develop into a powerful forward-looking, prosperous, healthy nation, we need a virile press with a modern mind, alert intellectuals and scientists with a scientific temper and a Left party with a firm commitment for social change. Then only these three key sectors can become instruments of social change. But I see not even a glimmer of hope, at least in the foreseeable future.



## E. V. K. SAMPATH PASSES AWAY

It is with deep regret that we announce the sudden and sad demise of Mr. E.V.K. Sampath, a veteran rationalist leader and Vice-president of T.N.C.C. Mr. Sampath, a nephew and a close confidante of the great Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy, parted ways with D.M.K. to make an impact on the national scene through the Congress. His attempts to interest Congress in the Rationalist movement did not succeed, thanks to the conservative leadership of the party in Tamilnadu. For his part he was always enthusiastic in taking part in rationalist meetings and programmes. He inspired and encouraged rationalists. His untimely demise is a great loss to rationalism, more so for rationalists in Tamilnadu. The only fitting homage we can pay to this leader is to make his dream of an All India Rationalist Movement come true.

He is survived by his wife, four sons and two daughters. I.R.A. and FREETHOUGHT convey their deep condolences to the bereaved family.



# SICKLY SAI

By U. R. KAMATH, Hubli

On 28th October, 1968 Sai Baba addressed a meeting sponsored by the K.M.C. doctors in Hubli on the ground in front of the college at 5 p.m. The Principal of Dharwar Janata College, Prof. Dharwadkar (a close friend of Prof. Gokak) introduced the Sai Baba as "Paramatma is standing before us and we have become Dhanya". After this meeting, he was driven to Davangere, for delivering his sermons there the next morning at 8 a.m. and then at Ranebennur, at 10 a.m. and at Haveri at 11-30 a.m. But this "Pawada (miracle) Paramatma" developed high temperature and convulsions at Davangere after 9 p.m. and had to be rushed back to the University Campus, Dharwar, the same night for treatment, where he was the guest of the then Vice-chancellor. The people in Davangere could know of the meeting in the morning by a notice board kept on the dais. But nobody cared to intimate this to the sponsors at Ranebennur and Haveri where people gathered. Several thousands had to wait for hours after the scheduled time in the hot sun in both these places till the convenors got the news of serious sickness to the 'Paramatma', by

telephoning to Davangere. This news of his sickness and consequent cancellation of the meetings, appeared in the "Samyukta Karnatak" the next day.

The version given by his staunch devotees was that he, some times gets the sickness of his "Bhaktas" transferred on himself, but no one denies that he becomes sick very often. How is it one, who could cure another's sickness by his miracles, could not cure himself especially when he had made thousands wait?

Another instance was when he was taken to Panjim-Goa, some years back by the then Governor, Shri Nakul Sen but this man became seriously sick the night previous to the day of his sermon. The Government doctors had to struggle for a full day to enable him to sit on an easy chair next evening, only to raise his hand to "bless" those who had come for 'Darshan' but without any sermons.

The recent instance of the same type took place in March, 1975 when a big pandal was erected for his sermons in Dharwar, but the Pawada man could do no Pawada for his own sickness and remained absent when a big crowd had assembled at the scheduled time (5 p.m.). But the students who became convinced of his bogus claims came in large numbers the next day evening and showered a rain of eggs and tomatoes on him calling him names. It was a hell of a task for sponsors to rescue him into the car, which was driven away at great speed. The "Samyukta Karnataka" inserted a news item the next day that his programme had to be stopped because of the 'rowdism' of some of the students.



# ONLY DEAD BIOGRAPHY TO DEATHLESS GODS?

JAGANADHAN, Baroda

God is said to be eternal and hence is believed to be living even now. He is also supposed to be omnipotent. If he is still active, why is it we do not hear about his deeds since hundreds of years? In recent past or in our times, something like the miracles in puranas should have happened if he had any powers. Why has it remained dead, since hundreds of years? The "Sastras" and "Puranas" are the only source of knowledge regarding god. Those epics were the products of imagination of godmen who were interested in exploiting and suppressing the working class.

On the other hand, recent human history is full of achievements. The creative powers of man have given all the comforts to humanity. Even inanimate objects like

metals and sand have become more useful and valuable. The space and technological advancements are proof of man's creative genius. But what is the latest creation of the "all-powerful" god? Could he not at least increase his family size? Did Siva practise family planning after two sons. How about the succeeding generations of Subramania? Did they become sterile? How about the 'creator' Brahma and his cohort?

When man has begun to explore and conquer the seas, did not the mini gods complain to Vishnu of the impending danger? What is he doing about it? Or, is he content to imagine that the saline water is all milk?

When will gods take up cudgels against rationalists? It may need a special 'Avathar' to annihilate this dangerous species. Is it possible that the gods, tired of their rat, bull, eagle and buffalo rides are marvelling at the cycles, cars, trains, aircrafts, rockets and satellites? Either they should be waiting for man to develop newer means of locomotion to copy them or they should be so heartless as to continue to harass the poor animals?

Poor gods! They look like savages before refined man. Will we be able to teach them technology and science? Could it be that they could not learn these new branches? That accounts for the aversion of their earthly agents, god-men towards science!

If you ask me personally, any day I would choose to be a man rather than a powerless god in an outmoded environment with primitive comforts!



# Bhagavantham's Disclaimer

Dr. A. T. KOVOOR

In "An Explanation" by Dr. S. Bhagavantham (1976, November 28) he disclaims the authorship of the story about Sai Baba materialising a Seiko watch and presenting it to the proprietor of the Seiko Watch manufacturing company of Japan.

Dr. Bhagavantham writes that what I have written in my article (1976, September 12) is a "fantastically untrue story". He continues, "The first time I heard about a Seiko watch manufacturer visiting Puttaparti is through such cooked-up report..... I recall some years ago a friend from Kerala sent me what he called an English translation of an article that appeared in Malayalam in one of the local papers containing an account of several miracles said to have been performed by Baba, and asked me if I had written that. I promptly replied that Malayalam is not my mother tongue, I could not write in that language, and I could not have written anything even remotely

like it in either English or any other language".

As I am the person responsible for exposing this hoax by conducting thorough investigations, I wish to ask a few open questions to Bhagavantham. Since he has not replied any of my previous letters on this matter, I request him to reply the following questions through this paper for the benefit of the readers too:

1. Why did you not disclaim the authorship of this "fantastically untrue story", through the "Malayala Nadu" weekly, the journal in Kerala "several years ago"?
2. Why did you not take legal action against "Malayala Nadu" and its editor for defamation for publishing this "fantastically untrue story" in your name?

the Egyptians Ex. 3: 22.

vicked prosper. Job 21: 7. 13

God all things are possible  
6 He "could not drive out  
of the valley, because they  
of iron" Jud. 1: 19.

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# BIOGRAPHY DEATHLESS GODS?

AGANADHAN, Baroda

3. Before reading my article in the last September the same Seiko the first edition, Sivam, Sun-turi of Putta-

eted from the at book?

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them. can you truth about at

7. If Sai Baba is an omnipotent and omniscient "god" as you say, why was he afraid of meeting me when I went to meet him by appointment?

I met the editor of the "Malayala Nadu" weekly, Mr. S. K. Nair, at Quilon on December 28, and told him about Bhagavantham's disclaimer. He told me that he is prepared to produce the original of Bhagavantham's article in English with his signature at the appropriate time. As I am keen on exposing the false nature of his disclaimer

I invite him to sue me and the editor of the "Malayala Nadu" weekly for defamation.

I am now fully convinced that, like this eiko watch story, all the other so-called miracle stories of Sai Baba written by his propagandists Kasturi, Bhagavantham, Gokak, Karanjia and others, are mere cock-and-bull stories cooked-up and published with the motive of exploiting the gullibles. These propagandists say that Sai Baba, being an incarnation of god, can materialise anything by his divine powers. It was for testing their claims that I went to meet Sai Baba at Whitefield last month. In my letter to Sai Baba written on 25th November last year I informed him that I would be visiting him to test whether he could materialise an exact replica of a currency note of Sri Lanka shown him. But, fearing that their hoax would get exposed, Baba's propaganda agents at Whitefield prevented me from meeting their god.

If they sincerely believed that Sai Baba was an "omnipotent and omniscient god" they would have been only glad to make use of my visit to convince a sceptic like me about the divine power of their god, and thus silence all their critics. These shrewed schemers knew the danger of my meeting their god—a god who should be protected from Dr. Narasimhaiah and Dr. Kovoor !!

READ

## CHARWAKA

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# CAN WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE ?

## CONTRADICTIONS

Satan provokes David to number Israel.  
Chron. 21 : 1.

God moves him to number them.  
2 Sam. 24 : 1.

If both accounts are true, God and Satan are the same person. The Bible God punishes neither Satan nor David, but slays 70,000 Israelites for being counted - at his own instigation, according to one version. David justly remonstrates with his deity (2 Sam. 24 : 17) : "Lo, I have sinned..... but these sheep, what have they done?"

"Thous shalt not steal" Ex. 20 : 15. "Ye shall spoil the Egyptians" Ex. 3 : 22.

The wicked prosper. Job 21 : 7. Not so. Ec. 8 : 13

"With God all things are possible"  
Matt. 19 : 26 He "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron" Jud. 1 : 19.

"There is no respect of persons with God". Rom. 2 : 11. He authorizes selling diseased meat to aliens. Deut. 14 : 21

Image-making forbidden. Ex. 20 : 4  
Commanded. 25 : 18

Paul and James clash over justification. Paul (Rom. 2 : 38) "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" James 2 : 24) "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only".

Martin Luther (Table Talk) : "He that says the gospel requires works for salvation, I say flat and plain he is a liar. If men only believe enough in Christ they can commit adultery and murder a thousand by works. Christians, whom do you follow, Paul and Luther or James?"

The Bible contains 2,000 contradictions.  
[More on this in the coming issues—Editor]



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## HOW COMES EVIL ?

Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot ;  
Or he can, but does not want to ;  
Or he cannot, and does not want to.  
If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent.  
If he can, but does not want to, he is wicked.  
If he neither can, nor wants to, he is both powerless and wicked.  
But if God can both abolish evil, and wants to,  
then how comes evil into the world ?

—(Epicurus)

## Dr. Kovoov Answers . . . .

1. Question : Kundalini Yoga experts by their touch of Moolandhar Chakra raise Kundalini Shakti and take to Agna Chakra (eyebrows centre) and then to Sahasrara Chakra (top of the head). The same can be done by Hypnotist also. If this can be done by Hypnotist then it can be proved that Yoga is false. Kindly explain.

M. SIVANAGIAH, West Godavari, A P.

Answer : Kundalini Sakti—the so-called Serpent Power—is only a fantastic idea created by the deluded mind of a psychopath. Nowhere in the human body there are the serpent Kundalini, Agna Chakra, Sahasrara Chakra etc., as mentioned by exponents of Kundalini yoga. Nobody can acquire the fantastic powers attributed to Kundalini Yoga. That is why I have offered one lakh rupees to anyone who can demonstrate such powers.

2. Question : Sai Baba is a multimillionaire cheat with the backing of those cunning contractors of Sanathan Hindu Dharm, hired scientists and degraded vote-hunters, political leaders and ministers. How can you get him into a trap on your mere one lakh ?

MOHANSINGH PRADHAN, Sikkim

Answer : Sai Baba's reluctance to face my challenge is not because he has enough and more money than I have offered, but because of his fear of his hoax being exposed.

3. Question : When you shut the holes of your ears with your thumb fingers, you hear sounds like continuous jingling musical sound of a big temple bell. What is that musical sound ?

MOHANSINGH PRADHAN, Sikkim

Answer : The sound you hear when both ears are closed is neither musical nor that of a temple bell. It is just a hum created by sound vibrations reaching the temporal bones.

# EXORCISMS

(The following is an extract from Presidential Address by Miss. Barbara Smoker at the Annual General Meeting of the National Secular Society in London—Ed)

"We have seen in recent times a sudden upsurge in occultism, covering a wide range of superstitious beliefs and practices, some of which are far more dangerous than the general run of orthodox religion—at least, since it gave up burning heretics and terrifying children with lurid descriptions of hell.

The mainstream Christian churches, having played down Satan and Hell since the turn of the century, have destroyed their *raison d'être* and have seen their congregations melt away, while the fundamentalist and charismatic wing of the Protestant churches retained its hold on more people. Being now proportionately the strongest wing of Protestantism, the evangelicals have become more influential

than formerly, and have forced the hierarchy to condone more primitive practices and beliefs.

It is significant that the present archbishops of Canterbury and York are far more evangelical than their immediate predecessors.

The orthodox Christian churches which stood aloof from spiritualism and Christian Science during their Victorian heyday, have now started jumping on to the present bandwagon. A church of England clergyman, the Reverend Trevor Dearing, who recently published a book on demonic possession and exorcism, combines what he calls 'the two ministries' of exorcism, and faith-healing.

He was eager to demonstrate both in a Birmingham television studio last month. I was invited to appear on the programme with him, as token opposition, and I found his performance, at a distance of three or four feet, even more sickening than I had expected.

In the hospitality room before the programme began, I listened to his female disciples chattering about him like lovesick schoolgirls. In the studio, I was amused to see that the camera crew had marked the floor not only with Mr. Dearing's standing position but also with the spot on which the exorcisee, in a re-enactment, was to writhe and the candidates for faith-healing, in actuality were to swoon.

Mr. Dearing has the advantage of good looks, which he enhances with eye-catching clothes and a carefully casual hair-style. But his greatest asset is his long, sexy fingers. While he presses the forehead of a client with the fingers of one hand and

the back of her neck with the other hand, his congregation, well represented in the audience, sing, to an affective tune, 'He touched me, he touched me!' No doubt, if asked, they would insist that 'He' is Jesus. But the sexual connotation could hardly be more explicit. People suffering from neurosis often fall an easy prey to such exploitation.

The entry of many clergymen of various denominations, into the demon business has given considerable impetus to belief in demonic possession, and is the chief cause of recent tragedies, the most publicised of which have been two horrific murders. There was the murder of Christine Taylor by her husband after he had been subjected to a night of mind-bending medieval ritual presided over by C of E Methodist clergymen. More recently there was the murder of eight-year-old Samantha Read by her father while her mother and five-year old brother looked on, because they believed she was possessed by a devil that threatened the salvation of mankind as the end of the world drew near.

Not only the clergymen who have taken up demonology professionally, but also the churches as a whole must accept a large part of the responsibility for these appalling events. Although 65 leading theologians last year denounced the practice of exorcism today, there was only one bishop among them, and most C of E bishops merely counselled stricter rules for carrying out exorcisms. This implicit endorsement by the established church fanned the flames of popular credulity.

It should not be forgotten that, despite the denials of more sophisticated theologians, beliefs in demonic possession is crucial to the Christian faith. The one justification for Christianity is its fight against the wiles of Satan and his wicked angels, from whose power souls must be redeemed by baptism and faith in order to gain eternal bliss.

The demonologists are really the consistent, true Christians. So perhaps, after all it is still religion itself, in its most basic forms, that is the chief enemy of rationalism and of humanity."



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## GUILTY KRISHNA

Judge : What do you have to say about the charge sheet framed against you.

Accused : Your Honour does not seem to have read the Gita. I am only instrumental. The real culprit is Krishna.



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# News and Notes

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## M.R.C. SUBRAMANIAM AND 'MURUGA'

According to Press reports, Mr. C. Subramaniam, Union Minister for Finance is understood to have visited Palani to receive the blessings of "Muruga" before he inaugurated his election campaign. All the same he spared no efforts to enlist the support of A.I.A.D.M.K. and C.P.I. before he filed his nomination. Muruga is the fourth (though non-contesting) partner in the electoral alliance!

\* \* \*

## ELECTION AND RAHUKALAM.

According to newspaper reports, no candidate in Tamilnadu filed his nomination form for the ensuing elections during 'Rahukalam' which is supposed to be an inauspicious period of 1½ hours. About 400 candidates have filed their nomination for 40 Parliamentary seats. Let us see how all 400 candidates win the elections and cramp into 40 chairs!

\* \* \*

## SWEDE BACKS OUT

Mr. Kjell Eide of Sweden, who undertook to WALK ON THE SURFACE OF WATER in response to Dr. Abraham Kovoov's offer of one lakh rupees, and paid his earnest deposit of 160 dollars, has not arrived in Sri Lanka till yesterday - the last date fixed for his arrival in the island to make the necessary arrangements for

conducting the demonstration on February 12th at the Josephian Pool.

This is the second time Dr. Kovoov is winning money through his thirteen-year-old permanent challenge against persons who claim psychic, parapsychic, occult and spiritual powers, although he has not lost even one cent. The first was from Dr. G. Venkata Rao of Bangalore for demonstrating the divine powers of the seven-year-old Sai Krishna of Pandavapura in Mysore, a protege of Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi.

General Secretary  
Sri Lanka Rationalist Association.

\* \* \*

## PRIEST'S AVARICE Rs. 1.38 CRORES. RELIGION IN ACTION

Income-tax authorities seized more than 2,000 items made of diamonds, gold, emeralds, silver jewellery and cash worth Rs. 1.38 crores from the residence of a temple priest and four jewellers. It was the biggest seizure in the city so far. Ornament valued about Rs. 14 lakhs and cash amounting to Rs. 47,000 were also seized from premises of four jewellers alleged to have formed a syndicate to purchase jewellery from the family of the priest.

Jewellery worth Rs. 40 lakhs belonging to the temple in which the priests are employed has not been seized as it belongs to a 'trust'.

The items, seized in the three weeks search, include a 'gulab dani' (long-necked vessel for sprinkling scent) in gold, set with emeralds, rubies and diamonds, spoons, tumblers and plates of gold, miniature elephants, houses, deers, peacocks and sparrow, all in gold with mina work and set with diamonds. A hindola with a gold sheath valued about Rs. 1.35 lakhs was also seized. A silver race course set and silver horses, mirrors with gold frames, a kuja made of gold with mina work and set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds inset were seized.

A gold cradle worth Rs. 9.35 lakhs, a miniature bathing ghat in silver, a chess set made of gold and silver were also seized.

(Courtesy: Indian Express, 11-2-77)

### CONFISCATE TEMPLE GOLD

The State Committee of Kerala Rationalist Association which met in Ernakulam on 9-1-77 under the presidentship of Dr. P.V. Velayudham Pillai, appealed to the Government to confiscate all the idle wealth in the form of gold amounting to more than Rs. 1,000/- crores, in the temples, churches and mosques and to utilize it for the reconstruction and development of the nation.

The communal organizations like RSS and Jamat e-Islami are actively working under the guise of religious organizations to meet their antinational ends. Ayyappa Seva Sangham, Sai Seva Samithi and Kshetrapunardharana Samithi are some of the platforms misused by such elements.

The State Committee of K.R.A. took this matter very seriously and requested the Government to prohibit public activities of such religious organisations.

The Committee asked the Government to pass a bill by which legal action may be taken against 'miracle-men' who cheat thousands of ordinary gullibles every day. U. Kalanathan, General Secretary, presented the report and accounts. Mr. Edamaruku, M.B.K. and others participated in the discussions.

### CHARGE AGAINST KARANJIA

"Sai Baba Exposure Committee" constituted under K.R.A. will help 'Janayugam' weekly in the case against R.K. Karanjia, editor of Blitz. Janayugam has charged Blitz of taking Rs. 10 lakhs as bribe from Sai Baba for supporting the latter in its issues. For this charge, Blitz has already served legal notice to Janayugam.

The Committee decided to conduct five study camps at different centres in Kerala in the summer vacation. It is also decided to affiliate K.R.A. to I.R.A. keeping its autonomy.

—U. Kalanathan, Kadalundi

### CHANDRAPUR RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Rationalists of this town was held on 18th November, 1976 under the Chairmanship of Mr. M.Y. Dalvi, (Joint Editor of "LOKMAT", a Marathi

daily of Nagpur) and it was decided to form the Chandrapur Rationalist Association with the following as Office Bearers.

President :

Mrs. Prabhavati Muthal

Vice President :

Mr. N.G. Nagpure

Secretary :

Mr. R.D. Dahiwade

Joint Secretary :

Mr. Rehim Azmi

Treasurer :

Mr. B.S. Salankar

Every Sunday a meeting of the rationalists is being held and discussions and study classes are being organized. Lectures are also delivered on selected subjects.

—Udayabhanu, Chandrapur

\* \* \*

#### TROMBAY RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

The following have been elected as Office Bearers and Managing Committee Members of the Trombay Rationalist Association :

President :

K. Thankappan

Vice President :

T.C. Thomas

General Secretary :

T. Unnikrishnan

Joint Secretary :

P.C. Panicker

Treasurer :

M. Sagarani

Joint Secretary :

C. Parameswaran

Members :

K.P. Gangadharan,

V. Keshavan,

M.D. Koshi,

N. Krishnakumar

\* \* \*

#### MADHYA PRADESH RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

The following have been elected as Office Bearers, Governing body members of the Madhya Pradesh Rationalist Association.

President :

P. Parameswaran, M.A.

Vice President :

R.M. agarwal

General Secretary :

S.V.S. Nair

Joint Secretary :

P. Diwakaran

Treasurer :

N. Vasu Pillai

Governing Body Members :

P.K.K. Nair,

V. Varughese,

Krishna Nair,

N.K. Narayanan,

A. Khadar,

## NIZAMABAD DISTRICT RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

An Association in the above name has been formed with Headquarters at Nizamabad. Mr. P. Raja Ganesh is the President of the Association.

## MACHILIPATNAM RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

A Rationalist Association has been started at Machilipatnam with Mr. K. Sudha Bhasker as its Secretary.

## AMALAPURAM BRANCH OF I.R.A.

A Branch of I.R.A. was inaugurated at Amalapuram on 10-2-77. On this occa-

sion they have also brought out a News Bulletin by name 'VELUGU' in Telugu edited by Mr. Vyara. The following are the Office Bearers of the Branch.

Hon. President

V. Suryanarayana Raju

President

V. Subba Raju

Vice President

Vyara

Secretary

S.K. Mohan Rao

Asst. Secretary

K. Bala Vidya Sagar

Treasurer

P.R.L. Gupta

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## "CONFESSION" IN ADVANCE

A Christian: Next Sunday I may not be able to go over here as I have to participate in a robbery. So, Father, can I 'confess' about it in advance!

Priest: I do not think there is any precedent for it.

Christian: OK. I will come Sunday after the next.

---

## THUS SPAKE GITA

Manager: How irresponsible you are? Don't you know I believe in results?

Clerk: Sorry Sir. I believe in the Gita, It enjoins us not to bother about results.

Manager: Oh, Krishna !!



## BOOK REVIEW

### "CONSPIRACY BEHIND COMMUNAL RIOTS"

by V. T. RAJSHEKAR SHETTY

Mr. V. T. Rajshekar Shetty, the author of the book needs no introduction to our readers. As the General Secretary of the Karnataka Rationalists Association and a progressive journalist, his contributions have been regular, interesting and thought-provoking.

The present booklet of hardly 20 pages on a topic of abiding interest to Indians is illuminating. The author has analysed how poverty, ignorance and the strangle hold of religion have retarded the progress of Muslims in India. He has emphasized that the vested interests in the Muslim Community viz., the rich people and the Mullahs have kept the masses, especially the Muslim women backward. The game of the Congress party supporting the progressive Muslims outside the country while pampering the conservatives and obscurantists amongst Indian Muslims is brought out vividly. The contradictions of professions and practices with regard to secularism amongst the leaders are also emphasized. While he has mercilessly and rightly condemned the Jan Sangh tactics of subordinating the interest of 95% of the Hindu population to that of the upper caste Hindus by creating the bogey of Muslim domination, he has, in no uncertain terms,

pointed out that the ruling party has no encouraged progressive Muslims.

As a true intellectual, he has come out with the bold suggestion that unless class struggle is wedded to caste struggle, the Muslim masses will not be liberated. According to him, this is possible only when the Left movement also takes to a rationalist movement aimed at making the people scientific minded. He has rightly called upon the progressive Muslims to join hands with the Leftist parties and adopt a revolutionary path radically departing from the past. His call is equally addressed to Muslim women and the Youth. He concludes that the hold of Mullahs must be broken and a reform of the Muslim Personal Law must be given top priority.

All rationalists should read this booklet to understand the ramifications of Jan Sangh and the political, economic and psychological make up of the Indian Muslims.

The book-releasing function appeared to have been a grand success. We congratulate the author and New Era Publishers. The book is priced at Re. 1/-

Copies can be had from IRA.

## Letters

(Continued from page 30)

maintain a ward and prove the bonafides of curing patients through prayers.

If Dr. Keni is successful, there is no need for doctors or hospitals. Has he converted his clinic into a prayer hall?

Joshi Wada, Bombay

### SWEAR BY RATIONALISM !

Sir, I have been observing for some time the activities and attitudes of the Rationalist Association. What I find lacking is, some active proposal for initiation. It is maintained that one must go only by REASON. If this is so, then how many of the rationalists will announce that they do not recognize any-

thing that cannot be proved by reasoning. For this purpose I suggest that a form of oath should be taken before a Judge and registered as an affidavit. In the oath one will have to renounce his faith and religion in which he was born. Once registered he will cease to belong to any religion, caste, faith or creed.

You can announce to the public the names of such persons who have given up their religion and faith, and have become real Rationalists in action. I am suggesting only an ounce of practice that will put all of us to test. Could this suggestion be thought over?

S. V. KIRLOSKAR, Belgaum.

(Mr. Kirloskar was the Vice-President of IRA in 1965. We welcome his guidance .....Ed).

---

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The other readers are also earnestly requested to rush their donations.  
Treasurer, Indian Rationalist Association,

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We heartily welcome the following NEW MEMBERS to I.R.A.

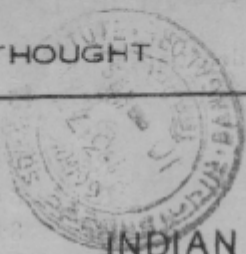
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